



MUSICAL NOTES AND COMMENT



MORGAN KINGSTON as LOHENGRIN
CENTURY OPERA COMPANY.



THOMAS CHALMERS
DAPPERTUTTO
in
"THE TALES OF
HOFFMANN"



MARY JORDAN as ORTRUD in "LOHENGRIN"
CENTURY OPERA COMPANY.

A NEW ORATORIO—PIERNE'S "ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI."

First Performance in
America at Worcester
Festival.

A special dispatch in The Tribune of last Friday chronicled the fact that at a concert of the festival of the Worcester County Musical Association on Thursday evening Gabriel Pierné's oratorio "St. Francis of Assisi" had been performed for the first time in America. The occasion was an interesting one for several reasons. The conviction is growing general in England and America that as an art-form the oratorio has outlived its usefulness and that if the activities of our choral societies are not to cease altogether something new must be found for them to do. For a few years, and in some localities, resort was had to favorite operas containing a large choral element, such as "Aida" and "Lohengrin." It was possible to offer some defense of this procedure in communities which had to forego the pleasure provided by stage performances of the lyric drama, but the fact did not live long; dramatic music without action, scenery and costumes could not satisfy the public, and serious music lovers felt that opera in concert form was a degradation of such dignified institutions as singing societies. Where

respect for choral music remained the device never gained a foothold. Conductors, however, were hard pressed for works which would keep alive the interest of their singers and prove attractive to the public. In New York, and no doubt also in other cities, every attempt to get away from the hackneyed list—"Messiah," "Elijah," "St. Paul" and so on—has for a long time been financially disastrous. The Oratorio Society has been kept alive for many years by the two annual performances of "The Messiah." In the Christmaside, but even these are beginning to lose their potency.

Thirteen years ago Sir Edward Elgar came to the rescue of the perplexed musicians with his "Dream of Gerontius," but its attractiveness was not lasting and its successors from the same pen failed to win a foothold. Nevertheless, the "Dream" belonged to a type which held out the best promise of a solution of the problem in its admixture of the dramatic element with the epic. The dramatic oratorio, of which class it is a representative, is not a new thing by any means, but the form has followed, though at some distance behind instrumental music and the opera, the latter-day tendencies, and it is as the latest word in this respect that Pierné's "St. Francis" is a matter of real moment. In it the composer has pursued a wholly original course, blending dramatic song with lyrical, using realistic delineation

effects in his orchestral parts, employing unconventional harmonies and, while treating a religious legend, doing so in a wholly romantic and secular manner. Though the story told is that of a saint and the founder of a great and ancient order, there are few suggestions of ecclesiastical music, and of these one which will be mentioned presently is more interesting for its archaism than for its beauty.

The story of St. Francis of Assisi was turned into an admirable oratorio by Edgar Tinel more than twenty years ago. The libretto of the Flemish composer, whose work was performed by the Oratorio Society in 1894, made use of some of the same elements which Pierné and his poet have employed. This was to have been expected, for the incidents in the life of the saint which are adapted to musical treatment spring at once into mind when that life is contemplated. Tinel's librettist found his material in the worldly life of Francis as a youth, his renunciation of pleasure, his wooing and mating with Lady Poverty (treating this incident as a chivalric allegory), his cloister life, with its labors in behalf of his order, his death and glorification. Pierné's poet makes a like beginning and ending, but introduces the episodes of St. Clara, the sermon to the birds, the meet-



MORTON ADKINS as
TELMUND in "LOHENGRIN"
CENTURY OPERA COMPANY.

ing with a leper and the stigmatization of the saint. Both composers, as was natural, found a text ready at hand for musical setting in the so-called "Canticum Soli," or "Canticum de creatura," which is attributed to Francis and has been adduced to prove the falsity of the

contention that no writings existed in Italian before the thirteenth century. This canticle Tinel sets to a well ordered melody as solo and choral refrain, Pierné yielding wholly to the dramatic idea and following the legend that while dying Francis added to his song in praise of "Brother Sun," "Sister Moon," "Brother Wind," "Sister Water," "Brother Fire" and "Mother Earth." A stanza in praise of "Sister Death" sets the words to a declamatory chant, medieval and ecclesiastical in tone, and goes so far in his desire to preserve local and historical color as to give the orchestra interludes in which the first beginnings of harmony are illustrated. The passages are made up of voices moving in parallel fifths, fourths and octaves—the device known in musical history as "organum." As has already been intimated, the effect is more interesting than beautiful.

The episode of St. Francis preaching to the birds gave Pierné an opportunity to introduce children's voices into the work and also some music suggestive rather than imitative of birds' song. The effect of small groups of the little singers (Mr. Mees concluded that solo voices would be ineffective) contrasted with the large choir of seventy voices and the twittering, chirping orchestra, is extremely pretty, and here there was an exhalation of the charm which the youthful chorists give to "The Children's Crusade." In this instance the striving for realism yielded results which were altogether lovely, whereas in other cases the good taste of the composer was brought into question. In the scene between St. Francis and the leper we are made to hear the clicking sound of the rattle with which the outcasts were once compelled to give warning of their approach, and in the delineation of the scene in which Francis receives the stigmata (a vision of the crucifixion) there are blows in the orchestra which seem to have been designed to represent the hammering of nails into the wood of the cross. In this scene Pierné takes a leaf from Debussy's book and uses his singers to make inarticulate sounds. Tones, uttered with the mouth sometimes closed and sometimes open, are woven into the instrumental texture, purely for the sake of color. The device is of questionable value. When Debussy, in the third of his orchestral nocturnes, makes his sirens sing the vowels "O" and "Ah," it is easy enough to forgive him, because we know nothing about the speech of sirens. So, too, when Verdi uses human voices to imitate the sighing and sighing of the wind in "Rigoletto," we make no protest because the effect desired is one which because of the effect of their construction, cannot produce. But to hear a chorus singing set phrases in harmony without uttering a word seems to be putting the human voice to an ignoble use. The result does not compensate for the deprivation. At a concert of the Schola Cantorum last spring a very beautiful arrangement of

OPERA AT THE CENTURY "Lohengrin" Is the Bill for the Fourth Week.

The fourth week's offering by the Messrs. Aborn in their popular grand opera season at the Century Opera House will be Wagner's "Lohengrin." There will be seven performances in English, with matinees on Wednesday and Saturday. On Monday evening, October 13, the opera will be sung in its original language—German. Miss Lois Ewell will sing Elsa on the opening night. The Ortrud will be Jayne Herbert, while Lohengrin will be sung by Morgan Kingston. Morton Adkins will be the Telramund. The artists appearing throughout the week in the other characters will be Alfred Kaufman, as the King; Florence Coughlan, as Gottfried, and William Schuster as the Herald. At the Wednesday matinee the artists who will appear in the change of cast in the leading roles will be the Messrs. Scott and Howard and the Messrs. Wheatley and Kreidler. The conductors for the week will be

Alfred Szendrei and Carlo Nicolia, while the stage will be under the direction of Luigi Albertini. On Monday night, October 13, the artists appearing in the German performance in the leading roles will be the Messrs. Ewell and Herbert and the Messrs. Bergman, Kreidler, Kaufman and Schuster.

Tonight occurs the first popular Sunday night concert which the Messrs. Aborn will give each Sunday evening during the season. The artists who will appear at this concert will be the Messrs. Amuden, Howard, Ewell and Herbert and the Messrs. Bergman, Kreidler, Kaufman and Schuster.

THE BOSTON SYMPHONY.
Dr. Karl Muck, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, on his return from Europe last Tuesday, said that he did not have a brilliant list of novelties to offer to the patrons of the orchestra the coming winter, as the last year had been most unfruitful in this direction. He has brought back with him the score of the new symphony by Heinrich Norn, of Dresden, best known in this country as the composer of the theme and set of variations which he called "Kaleidoscope." The new symphony is entitled "Vita." He has a symphonic poem by Reznicek, composer of the opera "Donna Diana," which is called "Peter Schlemihl," the source of its inspiration, of course, being the famous story of the man who lost his shadow. He has two pieces by Max Schillings, "Meergrus" and "Seemorgen," and he will do some

Continued on fifth page.

AUCTION BRIDGE CLINICS

BY GEORGE KLING

Law four of the laws of auction bridge as adopted by the Whist Club of New York, the recognized auction authority, reads as follows:

4. When the declarer wins the number of tricks bid, each one above six counts toward the game, two points when spades are trumps, six when clubs are trumps, seven when diamonds are trumps, eight when hearts are trumps, nine when royal spades are trumps and ten when there are no trumps.

This law is the foundation of the game and the end to be attained is the taking of as many tricks as possible after the winning declaration has been made. Thus a positive end is sought, and upon this premise the science of the game is built, a scheme of action that conforms to reason, logic and deduction and that permits of the highest form of these attributes in both bidding and play.

Now, any action based upon a nullo bid tumbles the whole auction structure and at once creates a distinct and separate game, demanding new and different laws.

No one has as yet evolved any scheme of nullo play that appeals to reason or good deduction. They will tell you how certain hands should be played, but they do not form any creative system of play that builds up by inference and deduction.

We therefore treat the nullo questions as of a separate game from auction—knowing full well it can never become a part of the game.

The game of nullo is generally bid at ten, with undercalling value in its relation to no trump and the player bidding one nullo contracts that he and his partner will take only six tricks—two nullo, only five tricks, etc. And when a nullo contract is made the reverse re-

sult at auction is scored.

The law of auction on revokes has for some time been the subject of discussion among the leading exponents of the game, and now seems in a fair way to be amended so that dummy shall have greater protection in the premise.

There seems to be no real good reason why dummy should not have the same right to declare a revoke against the opponents as the player of the hand and the opponents, and where dummy's interest is equally at stake it is certainly not equitable to bar him from penalty benefits that may escape his partner and at the same time may act as a vehicle for defeat of a contract and possible questionable play.

We heartily approve of the contemplated change giving dummy full rights as to revokes made by opponents.

Bidding on the exceptional type of hands at auction is one of the stumbling blocks in the game. Such hands are often the means of risks and blunders by the ordinary player and at the same time give the expert an opportunity.

The following hand in actual play recently illustrates the point:

♠976432
♥KJ9
♦AJ1085
♣AK

N
W E S
♠AK
♥AK
♦AK
♣AK

♠53
♥A82
♦AJ1085
♣K87

Score: Love-all, first game.

South declared one royal. As he had neither the essential high cards to advance the partnership interest in attack or defence nor a holding of fixed value sufficiently strong to act as a basis for an independent declaration, his action was detrimental to the interest of the partnership.

West declared three clubs. Eight clubs promising six sure tricks, supplemented by an outside ace and a void suit, together constituted a factor of importance bearing on the result of any hand. As a unit, the hand at the minor suit declaration was sufficiently strong to offer in defence of the adverse declaration.

Was the partnership interest best served by naming the suit? If so, how high in number of tricks should this hand be bid to demonstrate to a partner most clearly the character of the holding. A declaration of two coming after an adverse declaration and hence in the nature of a forced bid would leave some doubt in a partner's mind as to the possession of top cards. An unnecessarily high declaration, acting as a warning to partner against overcalling and showing at the same time a suit of unusual length, would promise to better promote the partnership interest.

West's declaration of three rather than four to discourage further bidding was in keeping with the hand's value. Despite the absence of top clubs, the composition of West's hand was such as to promise fair assistance to any partnership declaration.

North declared three royals. As he could further increase this declaration in case of an overcall, he acted properly in not unnecessarily forcing upon his partner a contract that might fail.

East declared four hearts. In a specu-

lative choice of three declarations (club hearts and no trump), without absolute knowledge of certain high cards vital to his own strong suit was undoubtedly the best course to pursue.

While at five clubs East supporting strength gave fair promise of a successful partnership contract, the chances were against the declaration holding. North's supporting bid over a high minor suit declaration practically insured a still higher adverse declaration. East's four heart declaration, though overcalled, would not lose its informative partnership value.

South passed. Having previously declared on a hand below the normal value of an original declaration, South to some extent made amends by refusing to overcall the adverse declaration.

West's pass needs no comment.

NORTH GOES TO FOUR ROYALS.

North declared four royals. Despite his partner's pass a game hand looked probable. His high hearts at the opponent's declaration would be badly situated and probably result in only one trump trick.

East declared four no trump. As unevenly divided hands, plainly indicated by the bidding, precluded the possibility of great success at a doubled royal contract and the doubtful location of certain high cards essential to success at a five heart contract, East naturally turned toward no trump with his exceptionally strong hand. North's supporting royal declaration made an original opening of a spade almost certain. With the opponents checked twice in their long suit and a partner's strength justifying a high suit declaration, the establishment of either hearts or clubs was practically assured.

South doubled, and North declared five royals. East doubled, and the bidding

ended. As the final bidding followed almost logically as a sequel to the earlier declaration, no further comment is necessary. With South holding the opponents to only one diamond trick, the final count gave East and West 300 points above the line.

Unusual holdings at auction permit of a range of action, and one is the bidding of the questionable use of a weaker suit, hoping to draw the opponent's fire to that point of defence, while really having a stronger suit to bring into action.

They are usually in the nature of a boost or acceleration, but tend to deceive one's partner more than the opponents.

The following hand sent in from the University Club of Chicago illustrates the working of such system in the play.

♠A94
♥Q10743
♦953
♣A4

♠J10852
♥AKJ65
♦862
♣K9

W E S
♠KJ762
♥QJ10753
♦K9
♣K9

Score, Love-all, rubber game.

South declared one no trump and West two royals. His selection of the suit without top cards in a choice between two five-card suits, relatively the same in trick value for game at love score, was explained on the ground that the declaration would probably be overcalled and then his heart suit could be more profitably employed at the higher declaration.

North declared two no trumps on a hand fairly strong in support of his partner, but unsafe at three hearts, the declaration required to overcall West. East on a strong two suiter, declared three diamonds, which South doubled. Although a double in South's position looks tempting, it could not be recommended. The fact that East, in spite of the adverse show of strength embodied in South's no trump declaration and his partner's supporting hand, deemed his holding sufficiently strong to make his own declaration of three diamonds should have suggested to South a deal peculiarly divided and his hand of uncertain trick value at any adverse declaration.

EAST TAKES PARTNER OUT.

South's holding was below the average no trump strength and a safe position at East's declaration should have led him to pass. West declared three hearts, which, of course, was doubled by North. As East's holding justified a take-out, he declared four clubs. The fixed value of his hand could be safely estimated at eight or nine tricks. At his partner's declaration East's holding was practically worthless, but at his own bid some assistance could be expected from his partner. South again doubled. Although the club contract was higher, it promised less favorable results than at his previous diamond double. West redoubled. Three trumps to ruff losers and help in the establishment of a long suit and two high cards that could be counted upon as absolute winners, made success probable in spite of a formidable opposition.

The argument in this case that a redouble would drive the opponents back to no trump is easily answered. The very strength expected from a partner in a redouble would be of equal assistance in defeating the opponents if a return to a no trump declaration was made. Both the adversaries passed, however, and the final declaration of four clubs redoubled remained unchanged.

South, figuring upon his partner's spade holding of either the ace or four to the jack as the basis of a supporting bid overcalling a royal declaration, selected spades as the most desirable suit to open with and led the king. This held the trick, but on the next lead North's ace was ruffed by East. Starting his long suit, East led the king of diamonds, and South's ace went to dummy's small trump. Two top hearts gave East discards of two low diamonds and another spade, ruffed low, put East in again. One of dummy's remaining trumps ruffed East's last small diamond and the other on a lead went to South's king, leaving North's ace to make later. Only three tricks making against the declaration. East and West went game and rubber with a heavy bonus on the deal.

West's departure from accepted lines in overcalling South's initial declaration calls for some comment. His action was taken upon a theory of defence on a hand that clearly contains sufficient strength to warrant an attacking declaration. Any theory contrary to the partnership interest is not to be commended at Auction. And especially so in this case, an initial strength bid having already been made by South, called for the strongest action by West.

There are a lot of banana skins on the path to success.